

9716
AN HUMBLE
ADDRESS
TO THE
CLERGY of ENGLAND;

Recommending
A METHOD
For the more speedy Augmentation of the
Income of their Indigent BRETHREN;
AND
For rendering the Provision of their WIDOWS
and ORPHANS more general, adequate,
and certain.

by Rev. Hutchinson of Holywell. Hunts

*Religion is the Foundation and Cement of human societies:
and when they that serve at God's altar, shall be ex-
posed to poverty, then Religion itself will be exposed to
scorn, and become contemptible; as you may already ob-
serve in too many poor vicarages in this nation.*

Life of Hooker.

CAMBRIDGE,
Printed by J. BENTHAM, Printer to the UNIVERSITY;
For W. THURLBOURN & J. WOODYER in Cambridge;
And sold by J. BEECROFT in Pater-noster Row, and W. SANDBY
in Fleet-Street, London; and J. FLETCHER in Oxford.

M.DCC.LXIV.

*The Author begs the acceptance of 3^d Edition
Holywell 9 April 1801*



AN HUMBLE
ADDRESS
TO THE
CLERGY of ENGLAND.

*Right reverend Lords, and
Reverend Gentlemen,*

WHEN we reflect on the immense affluence of the clergy, regular and secular, of the Church of England (if such it might then be deemed) from the close of the eighth to near the middle of the sixteenth century, we must confess that the civil power had great reason to be alarmed at their weight and numbers.

Towards the end of this time it appears (by a calculation made in the preface of *The Summary of all the religious houses in England and Wales*, published in 1717,) that the church was possessed of fourteen parts out of twenty of the wealth of the whole kingdom.

Be this as it may.—So many abbies, priories, colleges, præceptories, monasteries, nunneries, cells, &c. plentifully, and nobly endowed, under the supremacy of a foreign power, tending manifestly, in a thousand respects, to impoverish the nation; so many innovations both in the ceremonial, and essential parts of religion; such a

A

pro-

prodigious number of useful hands severed from the common-wealth, nay worse, become drones in the hive, living upon the sweets, and destroying the hoard of the industrious; such incroachments, I say, were alarming to the laity, and call'd upon them to exert that power, which a further aggrandisement of the ecclesiastics might in time utterly overthrow.

Our Henry VIII. who, I am afraid had nothing less than the good of religion at heart, being press'd by a well-known circumstance, (that merits no mention here) to throw off the papal authority, chim'd in with the just complaints and inclination of the people; and favour'd the introduction of the discipline and doctrine of Luther, which now was establishing in many parts of Germany.

Thus, to support a bad cause, was a most glorious and happy effect obtained. From whence we gather, that Providence will not prevent a general good, though even a partial evil should be instrumental in it's rise. Hence that Reformation took place which delivered down to us the many advantages, we at this day enjoy: amongst which none is greater than the abolition of that unnatural law, which enjoined celibacy to the clergy.

And it must be confessed, that not all the arts used by that wary, and arbitrary monarch alienated the hearts of those of his subjects, inclined to popery, from the usurpation of Rome, so much as his exposing the religious cheats, and impostures, the iniquitous practices, and lawless amours of the friars and monks in their convents and monasteries.

Our

Our historians tell us, " That the majority
 ' of nuns in many nunneries were pregnant ; a
 ' great number of abbots and monks were con-
 ' victed of criminal correspondence with harlots
 ' and married women ; and, not a few, detected
 ' in the gratification of unnatural lusts, and
 ' other brutal practices.' In short, abortive me-
 dicines before, and the hand of violence after
 birth, were said to have been exerted to de-
 stroy unhappy and innocent infants, lest their
 lives should have discovered to the world the
 secret vice and impurity of their parents.

These are avowed crimes, which that unna-
 tural injunction of an unmarried state brought
 upon the clergy ; when papal power and monk-
 ish ignorance waged war with humanity, and
 endeavoured to oppose the unalterable course of
 nature.

A river, whilst it pursues it's proper channel,
 disperses beauty and fertility to the vales through
 which it flows ; but no sooner do we oppose it's
 passage, than it scatters ruin and devastation over
 those very plains, which it was graciously intend-
 ed to enrich.

When authority, whether ecclesiastical or
 civil, imposes laws, contrary to the great and
 fundamental laws of nature and morality, it
 certainly acts as imprudent a part as those, who
 would stop the course of a river.

So absurd and irreligious an injunction as
 this, an injunction laid on those, set apart for
 the example of mankind, preventing them in a
 direct manner from being connected with the
 world by the common and necessary ties of hu-
 manity, could never enter into the heads of any

to devise, but such as were resolv'd to sacrifice religion and virtue to their ignorance and bigotry; or rather to their avarice and ambition. For I can hardly imagine, that even superstition itself could run into this absurdity, without being instigated by interested motives.

Whether the see of Rome, by debarring the clergy from intimate connections with the government under which they lived, might intend, by the celibacy of religious orders, to make them more intimately connected with her's; or whatever else might have been the motive; this happy nation has freed itself from their unevangelical, unnatural restrictions. And, to the praise of the authors of the reformation, it may be asserted, The lives of the protestant teachers of religion proved that their labour has not been in vain.

But tho' the reformed clergy are free from this restraint, and are again put upon the footing of human creatures; tho' religion by this means is rid of an unnatural burden, (I speak of that of our own and other reform'd countries) yet still that business was not conducted here quite so judiciously perhaps as it ought.

Had Cranmer, Cromwell, Latimer, &c. persuaded their master, when the useless endowments were taken away, to have given a part to the poor seculars, it had been happy for the clergy at this day. But he himself had other views, and was too imperious and arbitrary to be contradicted.

A little after his time, under his eldest daughter, persecution reached the life of those, that perhaps would have brought about further and bet-

better regulations. And the same graceless zeal, to which they fell a sacrifice, continued reign after reign to make it's appearance in one shape or other, preventing such measures taking place, as might have been productive of further advantages both to priest and people.

If matters had been smoothly and fairly conducted, one business of moment could not long have been neglected: (*i. e.*) when they allowed the clergy to marry, to have put them in such a state, with regard to income, as might have rendered matrimonial engagements as temporally prudent, as they were become religiously necessary.

This much being premised, it is now convenient to speak more immediately to the meaning of this address.

The inequality of livings (I speak of all dues and stipends whatsoever, appropriated to their respective cures) is so great, that all disinterested persons are unanimous in wishing some favourable amendment to take place.

This inequality too is the more glaring as it is contrary to all rules observed on other occasions. Dignity of office, or multiplicity of business is sure, in other employments of life, to obtain the greatest income. The soldier's pay encreases according to his command: the merchant enriches himself according to his industry and application. But the clergy, in a regular manner, partake of neither of these. They partake not of the officer's advantage: for with them a curate may have more than a vicar, a vicar than a rector, a rector than a bishop, merely considered as such. And on the other hand,
he

he must be very little conversant with what passes within his neighbouring parishes, who cannot see, that the greatest living often has the least duty, and the least benefice burthened (excuse the phrase) with the greatest cure of souls.

There may be two ways proposed to remedy this inconvenience: the one is to take from larger, and add to smaller benefices; the other to make an addition to the poorer livings, and let those that are well endowed remain as they are.

But objections may be made to, and many difficulties occur in, either of these methods of adjustments; mild and wise men, however, where difficulties do arise, approve of that attended by the least. And perhaps these two methods may partake of the nature of extremes, and consequently admit of the interposition of a medium.

First let us examine the objections.

I apprehend with regard to the reduction of great benefices, that no alteration, or diminution of an income can legally, or without a shew of despotism, take place during the life of the present incumbent; for these reasons:

He, or his friend, may have made an absolute purchase of his living (I wave the legality of such bargains) for which a sufficient acknowledgement has been made in proportion to it's value. The natural consequence of this is, That he lays his household expences, and plans of frugality in a very different manner, and upon a larger scale: so that it would be an hardship bordering upon injustice to make him, without his consent, fall from a state of opulence to a state

state of mediocrity, and reduce his manner of living, perhaps his charities, in the face of those, with whom he has hitherto lived upon another footing.

How hard this is to comply with, let such unfortunate people say, as have been accidentally reduced in their circumstances, contrary to their expectations! To rise with honour is natural to man : to fall is repugnant even to his rational desires.

And not only the immediate possessors of benefices would be hurt, but their benefactors themselves would also be affected.

If a patron has not made a purchase, it is in general to be presumed, that his ancestors have contributed largely to the endowment of his living; part of which is about to be added to that in the gift of another patron (which by the proposition is to be supposed :) this can to him be no very agreeable circumstance.

What is alledged in favour of private patrons may equally be affirmed of bodies corporate of what kind soever.

Bishops, and dignified clergymen not only justly avail themselves of the first objection, but have also another arising from their conspicuous station. Tho' it is to be wished, that the clergy in general were upon a more equal footing, with regard to duty and income jointly considered; yet it certainly is greatly inconsistent (if not with the gospel-dispensation) with the nature of our government in other respects, (whatever the favourers of the plan of the church of Geneva or the kirk of Scotland may object) that the episcopal office should cease.

The necessity of bishops being granted, it is likewise necessary, that pecuniary advantages should arise from their office in proportion to it's dignity and collateral expences.

I think it has been estimated, That the entire amount of the revenue of the clergy in England and Wales (bishopricks, prebendaries, &c. included) divided by the number of benefices with cure of souls will not yield 50*l.* each per ann. Would any, however anxious for a regulation, desire to see such a one as this take place?

Besides, should a majority of incumbents, whose livings are above par (for I presume without the consent of such majority it could never be done) should they, we will put the case, agree to divide their large benefices with smaller; great difference would naturally arise in the distribution. The confusion would be such as no man, how sharp-sighted soever, could determine where it would end. Broils, animosities, and discord would arise, where peace and unanimity ought in the most distinguished manner to abound.

So much for this method.

The next thing proposed to be consider'd was, How inferior livings may be increased without the reduction of superior.

Queen *Anne* (whose memory to the clergy will be ever sacred) in the third year of her reign was graciously pleased to make an entire grant of the first-fruits and tenths to the use of the poor clergy.

And this too her majesty was pleased to do in such a * way as left us at a loss to determine,

* See the statutes of the 5 & 6 of *Anne*.

whether

whether to praise more the matter, or the manner, of her generosity.

Now, tho' many have received, and many more, no doubt, will receive, this royal bounty ; yet it must be several centuries, according to the present course of things, before all, who are entitled to it, can procure it.

Suppose this favour of our religious Queen properly, and quickly applied for, and conferred, as the nature thereof will admit, yet in the mean time, if not afterwards, will not many, very many, livings cry out for assistance ?

Whence is this assistance to arise ? From the crown it cannot be expected ; it's bounties of later reigns having reduced it's abilities ; the monarch himself depending (with regard to monied matters) on the free grants and loyalty of the subject.

Nor can the nation, as a body loaded, as it is, with the enormous expences of five destructive wars, shew that laudable spirit of generosity, which so eminently distinguishes it's respective members above the world. Ask of ancient Greece and Rome ; look back to their progenitors the nations of the East : call upon the wide extended regions later found : appeal to her European cotemporaries ; and not one of them can outvie the liberality of England. Her charities (I wish she had fewer to hide) will cover a multitude of sins, and solicit favour and protection at the hand of Providence.

But burden'd as she is with necessary taxes, little can be expected from her as a body collected, to relieve the distresses of the indigent clergy.

B

Some

Some lords of manors in the extreme counties, and in Wales, might, (I should imagine, appropriate a small portion of common, or waste lands to the use of such poor livings within their royalties, as claim their attention, without any great injury to themselves, their farmers, or under-tenants; and it is a wonder their generosity has not, in such situations made that practice more general; as it would not, I apprehend, be attended with the trouble and expence of an application to the legislative power: Our mild and equitable government always acquiescing in any measure, even for private good, where the publick cannot be prejudiced, and where the parties interested are agreed.

But still there are hundreds of livings, which require it, that cannot by this method obtain relief. Some other way therefore must be found out to relieve the clergy, whose benefices are not a sufficient maintenance: and I, with due diffidence, beg leave to propose the following:

Let every bishoprick, living, benefice, &c. (how great or small soever, and under whatsoever denomination distinguished) pay annually, at the Easter visitation, a deduction of 5 per cent. out of it's amount into the hands of a clerk or treasurer, (suppose, if agreed to, the clerk of the office of their respective archdeacons) to be applied to the following purposes: 20l. per annum to the relief of every beneficed clergyman, of what degree soever, from a bishop to a vicar, or perpetual curate, of the lowest income, during their widowhood; no annuity or estate whatever, or any thing else

else, save a proof of incontinency, disqualifying them from the receipt thereof.

10l. to be paid to the son or daughter of any beneficed clergyman at the age of fourteen, and

10l. more (or 10l. to every such son or daughter) at the age of twenty one, whose parents are both deceased.

10l. Salary to the clerk or treasurer.

As in most archdeaconries this deduction of 5 per cent. will be found, I hope, in a few years to exceed the above demands; let the remainder, as soon as ever it amounts to 200l. be given to the parish of the least income within the archdeaconry, which by the act of Queen *Anne* requires that sum, to claim her bounty.

Thus will that glorious, and charitable benevolence have a more quick and easy way of communication, agreeable to the intention of it's royal founder: And, what may not be amiss, be pushed forward with more spirit.

The managers of this fund I would propose to be a commission of six: (*viz.*)

The lord bishop in every archdeaconry within his diocese;

The archdeacon: And

Four clergymen resident in the archdeaconry, to be chosen by ballot at the first annual meeting by the majority of beneficed clergy present.

This commission to judge, and determine of all matters regarding this fund; and to publish every year an exact state of their accounts to be distributed to every person interested.

These commissioners to chuse their treasurer, who must enter into a bond to them of such sum as they shall think sufficient: he being an-

swerable to them, and they to the archdeaconry, for the due discharge of their office.

Where two counties (as that of Huntingdon and most part of Hertford) are annexed in one archdeaconry; the business of each county might be separately within itself transacted.

At the demise, removal, or resignation of any of the four commissioners (the bishop and archdeacon being *ex officio*) another resident in the county, or archdeaconry, to be chosen at the next annual meeting as aforesaid: those already in the commission having no vote.

The deduction from the income of bishops to be equally divided among the different archdeaconries in the diocese, and what they may happen to enjoy as rectors, &c. to the use of the archdeaconry where such rectory, &c. is situated.

By this, or some scheme of this nature, with little or no difficulty would the great inequality of livings be less and less complained of; the rich would be no longer reproach'd with disregard of their poorer brethren; and they, on the other hand, would find their income increasing, their families, after their decease, in some measure provided for; and, consequently they themselves be enabled to pass through the world with that decent degree of honour and reputation, becoming the servants of God and ministers of the gospel.

Let none imagine, that I here mean to insinuate that only people of substance can pass through life with reputation and honour.

A nobleness of soul, and integrity of heart "which God likes best" may, and often are found

found to be constant companions in the self same cottage with poverty and distress.

Yet poverty in one, unable of himself, unable by the laws and customs of his country, and the dignity of his office to labour for the support of a family; poverty in a person, whose sacred order, and refined humanity oblige him to shew compassion, and to pass by many little exactions of his right: I say, poverty in such a man comes loaded with all it's ills, and calls aloud to heaven for redress.

To God, to our king and country all restraints upon lawful marriages are derogatory.

They tend to disgrace religion, and undermine the throne, and to distract and impoverish the people. Care therefore is taken in this scheme to ease the married, and throw the incumbrance on the bachelor. For tho' they both contribute indiscriminately to this fund, yet the married man has the advantage of the return.

If any oppose, That the wife, and not the husband is beneficed here, they may look into the best and oldest Book in the world, and there they will find and agree (if age has not with them prejudiced it's authority) that they are with respect to their interest the same. The married man will with satisfaction reflect, that whilst he is necessarily living up to the height of his revenue, his partner, at his decease, will have something to depend upon for her own and family's support.

This will enable him with more cheerfulness, and with greater consistency of character to contribute in his life time to the necessities of others; being conscious that those he shall leave
behind

behind him will be in some measure taken care of.

Nor is indeed the interest of the unmarried forgot. Their livings, if small, will equally, with others in rotation, be augmented: and they will in that case have a fairer opportunity of contracting matrimonial engagements with advantage and integrity. A clergyman from his education, from his use to society, from his commission, from the constant usage of all ages, particularly the earliest, is certainly upon the footing of a gentleman; at least while he acts as such, and no man is a gentleman further: as he is thus situated, he must hope for a partner of some education and fortune. This will be less difficult for him to obtain when there will arise from her connection a settlement of twenty pounds per annum: and in case of both their deaths their children if they have any will, as many of them as are under the age of fourteen at that period, have 10l. and they further (or as many children as they may leave under twenty one) will have at that age 10l. to be by themselves or nearest relations laid out for their service.

Trifling as this sum may appear; how many clergymen, that could make a shift to live decently themselves, have it not in their power to leave even so much, in the whole, behind them for their children?

To those who have some other little dependence 10l. or 20l. will be an addition to them in the way of education. To those who are left entirely destitute, this will be an acquisition; and if properly applied may assist in extricating them

them from that ruin, which too frequently attends those, who have formed from the outward circumstances, and manner of living of their parents, expectations impossible for them, without great helps and assistances, or without great luck, or uncommon genius, to arrive at.

It has been said, That more children of both sexes of the clergy turn out ill, than the offspring of those of other professions.

If there is any truth in this assertion it must be owing to what has been just now intimated; That there is no profession so ill adapted to provide fortunes for their children suitable to their reception in the world, when such, and under the advantage of their fathers influence.

These difficulties are a great hindrance to a young clergyman marrying well: and such as will be in some measure set aside by the execution of this or some such project. For young persons of circumstances of the other sex, and their relations, will not have the same objections as at present to form alliances with ecclesiasticks. And they too, on the other hand, will be the less liable to be led into rash engagements, prejudicial to their honour and temporal advantages.

It would be difficult in a scheme of this nature to consider the unbeneficed clergy further than by recommending an advancement to them of such sufficient salary as the nature and weight of their duty require. For if any thing were advanced from another quarter, they might thence be induced to accept of smaller allowances from their principals than at present; and that would seem unnecessary. Their change
of

of residence, and uncertainty of income, would render it extremely difficult to fall upon any simple method of interesting them in a project of this nature. However this, or such like scheme, must greatly add to their future prospects; and consequently by anticipation increase their present felicity. But, notwithstanding I may see difficulties here, should these proposals merit the attention of those concern'd; so many gentlemen of education and humanity, may prove that to be easy, which to me seems difficult; and should they take these projects into consideration, no doubt they would greatly improve, what I have now the pleasure to lay before them.

The utility, and even necessity, of some such scheme is evident.

Let any judicious person take a view of the state of the nation, and, if he is unprejudiced, I think, he will own, That many of the clergy are not at all affected with the great increase of it's wealth; and none of them proportionably, except in great towns where personal tithes or offerings are large.

All the advantages they reap from our riches, conquests, and commerce, must arise to them only as they are proprietors of lands. And we all know that the whole income of the church is by no means in land.

And if it were (as was before observed) they then could only partake of the poor advantages of the landed interest.

That the increase of the real, neat value of estates bears no proportion to the increase of specie, (whether real or imaginary it makes no
alter-

alteration, or if it does, it is for the worse) none can deny that have at all considered the matter.

Trade (from the greatest good some evil will ensue) has introduced such affluence amongst us, that the increase of the value of lands, charged with the exigences of government can come in no competition with it.

Affluence in all nations introduces luxury; and it is well known, that this kingdom has not escaped the infection.

Conquest and commerce are the causes of our disease; and, like a man in some certain stages of the gout, brought on him by a too plentiful use of generous wine, we can only prolong life by indulging in that which brought the malady upon us.

No restraint in a nation like our's can with safety be laid on legal trade. It thence necessarily follows, that the landed interest must be most burdened, even with the support of that, which, after it arrives at a certain height, must decrease in it's power.

Where are now the independent gentlemen of three or four hundreds a-year of *Queen Anne*? or of half that sum of *Elizabeth*? Look into any country of England, a little distant from the metropolis, and you will find many an old hospitable mansion in ruins, or in the hands of a needy tenant, which once afforded a kind refreshment to the weary traveller, and a welcome roof to every friendly guest.

If such private gentlemen, deserting their seats, cannot live upon their fortunes, but are obliged, in compliance to the times, to seek some employment to add to their income; what must

be the hardships that those labour under, who are debarr'd of many opportunities, open to others, of improving their revenues?

Besides, the clergy are still in a worse situation than the gentlemen above mentioned, as part of their income is in money: many vicarages by compositions entirely so; not to speak of fees, &c. common to all.

Now, money to them, who can put it to no other use than that of purchasing the necessaries of life, must decrease in it's value, in proportion as such necessaries of life increase in their worth. If the same quantity of malt, coals, candle, or any other taxed or excised commodity, is twice the price now it was fifty years ago, it is plain, to live as he did then, such vicar ought to have double the sum coming in, which he annually expends in such taxed commodities. And if all other things necessary for house-keeping are equal in their value increased (how far they in general fall short the reader must determine) then is it as fairly stated, as any proposition in Euclid, That twenty pounds, fifty years ago, are but ten now to every useful purpose.

This perhaps will be read (if read at all) by many a worthy man who needs not the authority or rules of the abovemention'd mathematician to convince him. The feelings of the heart are much more convincing, in cases of this nature, than the operations of the head, however accurate and just.

It may be objected, that a composition, or *modus decimandi*, under certain unequal circumstances, may be broken through; and small tithes, taken in kind, increased with the neces-

series of life. But gentlemen who argue thus must never have seen the difficulties that constantly occur in an attempt of this nature: and if brought to bear, such disgust and ill-will arise between minister and people, as would, render them in the end reciprocally unhappy with each other, and in the fray wound religion itself.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot help again recommending curates to the consideration of their principals, as their income is altogether in specie, and consequently greatly affected by the rise of provisions.

And now I will beg of my reader to cast his eye a second time upon the scheme itself, that he may be the better able to judge if it be practicable: and whether, if put in practice, the good ends intended will be fully answered: premising, that as this piece is only meant to point out the utility of an undertaking of this nature; I content myself with only bringing rude materials, and leave to nicer artists the care of choosing and rejecting what is fit, and unfit, for the strength and ornament of the building: and the rather, as a projector of this nature does not labour under the necessity of being so exact in his plan as an architect, who, if he makes one false line, tho' but on paper, his whole intended fabrick must suffer in the execution.

Five pounds per cent. are to be deducted out of the benefice of every ecclesiastick, to be applied to the use of their widows and orphans, and the surplus to be appropriated to the increasing of smaller livings:

"Multorum manibus grande levatur onus."

Bodies of men can with ease bear a burthen, which, on any of it's members separately imposed, would be insupportable.

In the army and navy deductions are made from the pay of the officers, which imply a possibility of the same being done in the church.

And those gentlemen too, who nobly, in the late times of danger and disturbance, in compliance to the laws, led out the provincial strength of their country for it's support, considering the disproportion of their pay, agreed to throw into one common purse monthly, so many days subsistence as would defray the expence in ordinaries of the whole corps. By this means an ensign lived for three shillings, as well as his captain for seven and sixpence, or his colonel for eighteen shillings.

The generosity of the superior officers of the militia found it extremely easy to take care of their younger brethren; and why might not something like this be done in the case before us? I see no reason why it ought not, but many why it should; and am convinced the difficulties thought to attend such a business, and not want of inclination in those concerned, are the cause of delay in the undertaking.

It will therefore be of use to shew, That these difficulties are less formidable when nearly examined (like objects to a timorous eye) than at a distance.

It may be said, That with military gentlemen there is less trouble to determine, what each should advance to the common stock, than with the clergy, when every income cannot so exactly be ascertained.

It

It is true no clergyman can say to a shilling what his living every year produces ; but he surely can tell within a few pounds ; and, that will answer the purpose of this plan.

Let every clergyman give in upon honour (I desire no better tie) what his living produces to the best of his knowledge the year preceding. If the sum is not even, that is, if it happen, for example, to be 39l. 46l. or 105l. let it be charged 30l. 40l. or 100l. This will answer some little alterations, that may annually happen in smaller livings afterwards: and in any that may fall ten pounds in their value, let them, upon a proper appeal, be reduced in charge in the treasurer's books: and the contrary take place, if livings are augmented.

I dare say no gentleman will be found on so good an occasion, where the great ties of humanity, honour, and justice unite, to forfeit any of these. It would be an indignity (considering to whom, and of whom I write) to insinuate, that should this be ever the case, it were easily detected, as few are ignorant at this time of day of their neighbour's circumstances. I have made an experiment, from whence I conclude, that it is possible, even for one person, to ascertain the value of livings in the county where he resides, with exactness enough to answer nearly the full intent of this design.

I do not mention this as a proper or exact way of doing it; but only to shew how extremely difficult (I always suppose unlikely) it would be to impose upon the commissioners.

Further; The widow of every clergyman of what degree soever is to receive annually twenty pounds.

As

As the husbands of those, who are left rich, most probably have in their life-time contributed largely to this fund, it would be but justice in such widows, and no indignity, to accept of this annuity: and their acceptance would countenance that of others, the far greater part, whose real necessities will thereby be supplied.

The world in general, I know, will not be affected with what I am about to observe; but for that I am the less concerned, as the discerning and tender-hearted few will.

A gentleman, who, notwithstanding his extensive charities, has left to an only daughter, perhaps the greatest private fortune in Europe, used (I have been told) to send to people of character in decay'd circumstances small bank notes in a blank cover: by this generous means relieving their necessities, at the same time freeing them from that confusion which usually arises in such circumstances.

There is an irresistible and (till I am better informed) I will call it, an amiable reluctance in the discovery of want in those, whose fortune and generosity formerly enabled them to relieve the wants of others. This may be pride; but, if it is, it has this favourable circumstance attending it, That the more any person is distinguished for honour and virtue, the more this failing, if such it be, is predominant. By this scheme, what the widows of clergymen receive, will be their due, their right and property; and no more dishonourable to accept than the pensions, on the like occasions, allowed to the widows of officers both in the land and sea-service.

As

As for the sum of twenty pounds to be paid to orphans, one half at the age of fourteen, the other at twenty one, the use of it is obvious:

The former to be applied for clothing or other necessaries when at school, or at their going to learn some employment, profession, or trade; the latter when they may be supposed at a proper age to shift for themselves.

Nor will this run so deeply into the fund, if we consider, that none are intitled to this benefaction but only those, whose parents are both deceased at the ages above-mentioned.

For if either be alive when they are at the age of fourteen, then only the sum of ten pounds is to be paid them at twenty one; and if at the age of twenty one, then nothing. Nor ought those to avail themselves of these pensions or gratuities, whose husbands or fathers did not subscribe to this fund. However, let it be remembered, That the widows and children of clergymen, deceased before this establishment (I speak like a projector, supposing, what I wish, already done) ought to receive at least from hence assistance equal to what they before enjoy'd from any subscription of this nature: for such subscriptions, on this project's taking place, would most likely cease. I should hope half the above advantages might be allow'd.

In short, whether the sum here fixed for the establishment of this fund, or those disbursements with which it is made chargeable, be too little or too much; whether this design would be generally received throughout the whole kingdom, or partially, in one or more diocese or counties; whether this will retard any charitable

ritable contributions from the laity (which I suppose it will not, but rather increase them) time and trial would discover.

Noblemen and others, who at present lend their kind assistance to the maintenance of clergymen's widows and orphans, finding how willing the sons of the church are to help themselves, and to what good purposes their bounties are applied, would, (I have not the least doubt,) give further countenance, and cheerful aid to so great a work. Nor can a fairer opportunity offer of retrieving the honour of their ancestors, who, blinded by the chicanery of priests, bigotedly lavished half their substance on an useless, ignorant, multitude, than this before us; where by a sum they never can feel, the decency of the church, not it's extravagant splendour will be restored, and her few and necessary servants supplied with (what many of them at present want) the simple conveniences of life.

Objections, I have already said, may be made to any project; and I can easily conceive that some may be found to lie against mine: none however, I hope, that may not with willingness and resolution be got over. For this reason, I have addressed this rude piece to the consideration of those, who are most interested to polish it: confessing myself sufficiently repaid, for the trouble I have had on the occasion, if these hints may be of use to others, whose power and experience in ecclesiastical affairs, may be greater than mine, and consequently more properly adapted for their improvement.

If religion is necessary, it is as necessary, the frailty of human nature consider'd, that some
should

should be set apart to explain, enforce and defend it. The story of innate knowledge has long since been justly exploded: none at this time of day are so absurd as to suppose, That man is (*αὐτοδίδακτος*) self-taught, in the strict sense of the word, and can form a just judgment of any action independent originally of human learning and instruction. Genius, 'tis true, will carry men a great way: but genius I only conceive to be a more ready faculty of the soul in comprehending the nature of things, and in ranging at pleasure the ideas she has from experience received. Experience brings materials for the mind to work upon; the more of which we have, with greater certainty and ease we form a right judgment.

But whence experience? From contemplation of the works of nature, and from books and men. Divine intelligence indeed has, and may again without these tedious steps reach at once the hearts of men: as in the case of the Mosaic and Christian legislators. Yet we see, that those very things, which they received through inspiration, they themselves conveyed to others by instruction.

If instruction from them to living witnesses was necessary, what less now can be required? What would become of religion and morality, of common charity and benevolence, were none set apart to explain, countenance and defend them? would not they without cultivation, like every better plant, wither and decay? and would not irreligion, and vice, like luxuriant weeds, grow up and flourish in their stead?

D

In

In conjunction with the laws, the ministers of the gospel are the human support of virtue. Does it not then claim our attention in the strongest manner to support them, who support that, without which, we are in estimation beneath the brute inhabitants of the forest?

The great Dr. *Whitgift*, archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of *Elizabeth*, had some words before that Queen, concerning the power and patrimony of the church, with the earl of *Leicester*, to which it pleased that noble lord to be a great opposer. The dispute ran so high, that they came to an open quarrel in her presence.

After they withdrew, the arch-prelate returned, and finding her Majesty opportunely alone; amongst many other warm expostulations, which she however took very graciously, is that prefixed to the title-page. Madam, (says he) "religion is the foundation and cement of human societies: and, when they that serve at God's altar shall be expos'd to poverty, then religion itself will be expos'd to scorn, and become contemptible, as you may observe in too many vicarages of this nation."

If this was the case at the time here mentioned, what must it be now, when, as I have shewn, the income of those vicarages have by no means increased in proportion to the additional expences of living?

Is it not obvious to the observation of every body, That persuasion comes with more weight from the pulpit from one, who lives independent of his hearers, than from him, who, perhaps, through the meanness of his circumstances,

is under many obligations to the lowest of them? Must not that freedom of reproof, so essentially necessary to the correction of vice, come with an ill grace from men thus incumber'd; tho' the due execution of their office, the good of their parishioners, and the honour of religion depend upon it?

Decency of dress, and cleanliness of person, a kind of under-assistants to eloquence and persuasion, cannot be expected, where, perhaps, a sufficiency even of food itself may be wanting.

But what shall we say when more material things are taken into the account; tranquility, peace of mind, leizure, and books, the happy, and necessary instruments of learning?

It is not to be supposed, that men at the age of twenty four, who have, perhaps in haste, run through the schools, can be satisfactorily instructed in every part of human knowledge. Those, who in that time have made, through genius and application, a great progress, will still think it necessary to pursue their studies:

“ So vast is art so narrow human wit,”
that the longest life, best health, greatest parts, and closest application can never reach the ultimate stage of literature. However, so great is our thirst of knowledge, that some have gone so far as to rest the proof of the immortality of the soul upon that insatiable desire of science, which men possess, unknown to the rest of the visible creation. Ought this pleasure then to be depressed in those, who have just tasted it? shall penury, anxiety and want shut the gates of the inner temple on those, who have trod the outer courts with so much toil and trouble?

In the first great propagators of our holy religion learning was unnecessary; they being immediately favoured with assistance from above.

The power of supernatural agency and manifest divine inspiration gained at once the heart (as before observed) without wandering through the intricate mazes of the brain: but now inspiration and miracles have long since ceased: now religion bereft of that ocular defence, calls again reason to it's aid; and happy it is for us, that reason is sufficient to defend it.

But what is reason? Reason in the mind is, what a diamond is in the bowels of the earth, rude and useless, till labour has brought it to light, and art has called forth all it's beauties.

When the principles of religion, both natural and revealed, are attacked (how lost to virtue!) by men of learning and parts; ought the defenders of religion and morality to labour under any disadvantage in the improvement of their minds? Ought the very means of strengthening their understanding be cut off, that they, with their cause, may seem to fall an easier prey to their adversaries?

The various branches of science perform the part of hand-maids to each other: or, with due deference to the professors of other arts, divinity with them is what the sun is in the solar system; she gives life and motion, light and splendour to the whole, whilst they in return attend on her, and at the same time yield their kindly influence to each other.

If the justness of these comparisons be admitted, then ought Divines in order to have an entire

entire knowledge of their own science, to be in the same measure versed in the principles of others, which is not easily done, even by men of striking genius, without leisure, and a degree of circumstances above want. How many worthy clergymen labour under this last difficulty let the reader determine! how much it may tend to affect religion in other respects I have already inferr'd!

It only remains, that in few words, I close these inaccurate proposals, by appealing immediately to those to whom they are humbly directed.

When first I concluded to address myself to you, of so great power and dignity, it behoved me to reconcile, at least, my conduct to myself. This I have done on the two following considerations :

Custom with regard to the author: Propriety with regard to the subject.

It is the peculiar and happy privilege of this government, for any, the lowest members, to petition and address even the highest branch of it, whilst that is done with decency and respect.

When you suffer me to apply this to my first excuse; the other will speak for itself.

In affairs of the church (saving the Sovereign's right) you are the undoubted legal and only competent judges. To whom but you should a proposal of this nature be directed? You, my lords! and gentlemen! best can tell, whether within your respective dioceses, neighbourhood, and knowledge, there are to be found those poor livings, here mentioned, attended by their consequences, dejected brethren, destitute widows

widows and orphans, left to the wide world, without friends, without support.

If there are, who labour under these difficulties, you are the properest judges, whether this method now proposed, or any other, can be fallen upon for their relief.

The urgency of the cause, added to these considerations, will apologize for the trouble the author has given you, prudently, at present, concealing a name, that is not of consequence to add weight to his argument.

5 0059

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE writing these propofals I have met with a Sermon, preached before the Governors of the Charity for the Relief of the poor Widows and Orphans of Clergymen in the County of *Suffolk*, in 1750, and now deservedly called for, and reprinted at *Cambridge*. What it's ingenious Author has there learnedly and religiously advanced, I must request the reader to do himself the pleasure, and my cause the justice, to peruse. As I address'd myself to gentlemen, in the greatest degree, conversant with the scriptures; it was the less necessary to enforce the argument, at every turn, with persuasive injunctions, drawn from thence: their own memories abundantly supplying this defect.

My Discourse partakes of the nature of an epistle, in which the subject is treated rather as a matter of civil concernment, a cause of mere humanity, and common justice: His is a Sermon, where he has properly and wisely availed himself of the sacred ties of Religion; and from thence has proved, That the care of Clergymen's Widows and Orphans is an indispensable duty, imposed upon mankind in general, and those who serve at the altar in particular, by a Power that ought to be implicitly obeyed, the great Author of our Being, and Governor of the Universe.

F I N I S.

